

SPIRITUAL TELEGRAPH

DEVOTED TO THE ILLUSTRATION OF SPIRITUAL INTERCOURSE.

"THE AGITATION OF THOUGHT IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM."

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The Principles of Nature.

A CONSERVATIVE BLOW AT SPIRITUALISM.

BY J. B. LOOMIS.

In the Springfield (Mass.) *Weekly Republican*, of the 16th inst., an editorial appears, headed "A Plain Talk about Spiritualism and its Tendencies." As it is eminently designed to cast odium upon the faith religiously entertained by many, that the World of Spirits is stooping down in close proximity to this, to elevate misguided humanity to a higher plain of wisdom, which five thousand years of experience, and eighteen hundred years with the "Word of God" have failed to do; as the article is calculated to point the finger of scorn indiscriminately at those who investigate this matter, whether blindly or in candor; and as the writer makes an incongruous mixture of truth and error, with an obvious design to sweep the whole matter by the board, it is thought due, in point of justice to both sides of the question, to examine some of the positions he has assumed.

The writer remarks that "wherever the 'Manifestations,' as they are denominated, are received as authority in Spiritual things, there Christianity is blotted out." If Christianity, in its purity, includes all the high motives of which the human mind is capable—all aspirations to goodness and purity—which that writer dare not deny, then his assertion betrays an amount of ignorance, in regard to the Spiritual Philosophy which is measured only by the folly that urged him to expose it.

"All [Spiritualists] are not so boldly infidel as Mr. Finney, nor have they so resolutely placed their feet upon God's Word." In this paragraph the writer exposes a sad want of discernment, which results from a fixed law of blinding preconceptions; for it was neither God nor his Law, as a foot-stool, upon which Mr. Finney placed his finite feet. It was the *Theological character and genesis of Satan* on which he came down with such energy. It was in view of the effect of such belief, that conservative dogmas were thus assailed. The truth suffered no intrinsic loss by his fearless blow, for it was aimed at error. But this want of discernment may be pardoned, perhaps, as it is mostly chargeable to bishop, priest, and clergy, who, in their persisting to copy the old mythological masters, give the plastic mind pictures of Deity and Satan, so nearly allied in hugeness, wrath, and jealousy, that the less worthy, in grace and in the mystics of godliness, can not be really blamed for want of discrimination.

The writer will certainly admit that the interminable unfoldings of Nature are the works or expressed thoughts, so far as they go, of Deity. None who accept the results of enlightened reason will deny this. When the Bible, considered as a revelation, is contrasted in authority with the Universe, if any doubt exist as to the authenticity of either, all Christendom will award the superior authority to the Universe, for it is the direct work of Deity; while the Bible is contingent upon the handiwork of man for perpetuity. Now in this way, and in no other, is our "reverence for God's Word destroyed," in this way only does "it loose its divine character," if it is lost or destroyed. If Nature, as God made it, can not be trusted as a revelation of his word or law, how can a book that depends on, and comes to us through, the medium of natural materials, arranged, too, by the art of man, be trusted? Truth lost or destroyed? Can finite man destroy or dilute God's Truth intrinsically? or, is it only thus in the brother's estimation?

Can a book of imperfect tongues, struggling through the hands of a host of priests and prelates, and kept sacred from the herd of plebeians who were neither deemed brethren nor the children of God; priests who, of course, were perfectly honest, truthful, and godly, who amend, translate, and edit the Word of God with absolute fidelity, having no eye to creed or dogma, be made paramount to the Divine Laws of the Universe, which, embodied in the form of worlds, is a direct edition of the thoughts and will of Deity? Certainly not. For men, devoid of all selfish motives and absolutely perfect, have yet to live and write. If the Spiritualists will not denounce error, whether found in the habilitations of antiquity, tradition, or priestcraft, who will? The materialist dare not rend the veil for fear he may acknowledge a hideous deformity. The book, however, is not rejected, as you say. The heel is not placed in contempt upon it, for it is known that truth creeps into many things, often without assistance, and its gems of beauty, whether found in the Bible, in science, or elsewhere, are more priceless than material gems which have set churches and sects at enmity, and touched their purest altars with pollution; yea, more saving and worthy than the "Holy Sepulchre," for which misguided men, though Christians, have shed rivers of blood.

The writer, proposing to "place himself on common ground with Spiritualists, and admitting, for the sake of the argument, that human reason is the only guide to truth," has, in his examination of the "signs which attend Spiritualism," so openly manifested a preconceived partiality, that it ruins his position on the ground assumed; for he gives unqualified latitude to

the claims of miracles, signs, and wonders, recorded in the Primitive History, and, if they conflict with reason (which is here thrown by), or with the immutable laws of Nature, no matter; all is received with obsequious non-inquiry, while "human reason" selects, in contrast with such leading miracles, the most infantile, imperfect, and trivial "demonstrations" that have been seen or said to have been seen. Is this using human reason as the only guide to truth? or is it degrading that type of an attribute of Deity to the narrow uses of sectarian aggrandizement? Is this because that particular, individualized "human reason" is selfishly blind in its opinions? or does it select such imperfect and trivial signs because the law of its affinities can not be violated? This "investigator" has rendered "Spiritualism" so exceedingly small, he has the faculty of belittling a matter so largely developed, that it is well for the conservatism and orthodox faith which he advocates, that he is not free to glance at ancient dogmas, for it would be ruinous to their apparent magnitude. While examining those parts of creeds and dogmas which do not disturb the popular belief, he sees all things beautifully magnified, but in seeking for truths in the New Philosophy, his glass is reversed, and all things become so small, that many beautiful gems of truth are lost in the contracted vision. Such observers are very useful appendages in the conservative temples. Their observations are valuable just in proportion as they are expert in seeing only that which favors their particular form of faith. They sometimes come to high places in the synagogue. If they see only through the creeds, and fear to look with the free eye of reason that God has given them, then, indeed, they are useful in that relation. This fear and servitude, from the very texture of the veil of their temple, hiding from them with a seeming purity and holiness, many corruptions and deformities, while nothing but the free, unshackled spirit of rational inquiry can rend that veil and show the worth of many things which tradition says are sacred.

If "wonderful signs" preceded and "inaugurated Christianity," which the writer observes as indicating its high mission, for the same reason it might be wisdom to hold our peace in the presence of the signs and wonders of to-day, for they may be the inauguration of some undeveloped, magnificent blessing to the race, which, in the "good time coming," the Pharisee may seek as a great salvation.

The writer thinks that the character of the doctrines taught by Christianity and Spiritualism respectively should be placed before the reason for decision. He then observes, in common with many, that "Christianity is a scheme of salvation." Ordinary reason would naturally decide that eighteen hundred years of experiment would be sufficient to settle the feasibility of any scheme. By what fatality does it come short of the promised unity and peace? But Wisdom is salvation without scheming.

Christianity "considers all mankind as sinful and depraved." If it never considers otherwise, eighteen hundred years more may elapse before the beginning of the "signs and wonders that shall follow." The Harmonial Philosophy considers mankind not as "sinful," but most of them misdirected, not as "depraved," but as undeveloped, and this misdirection originates in hereditary bias, angular developments of mind, and being influenced by circumstances unfavorable to a well-directed growth of mind and body. Let us observe the teachings of Nature in this matter. The little unripe apple explains the whole mystery of sin or depravity. In summer, when all things are growing, and of course imperfect, pluck and taste the unripe fruit. It is crude and bitter. But must it be blamed for being imperfect, when this very imperfection is one of the conditions of its existence? It is sin. Visit the same tree when autumn yields her bounty. The fruit is matured. It is good. Thus the sinful or undeveloped mind, when it attains, by a progressive unfolding, its higher perfection, will manifest qualities in keeping with its development. The present evil is but the imperfect development of ultimate good. . . . When a tree grows upon a poor, rocky, uncongenial soil, the fruit is like the existing conditions. So the man is the exact result of the conditions and influences that surround him. If he is bad, hereditary angularity or unfavorable conditions were the cause. If he is good, hereditary perfections and good conditions unfolded him.

"If a man steal, or lie, or murder, it is because he gives free rein to his 'natural' impulses and passions, etc." If Deity coincides with the writer's opinion of what he stigmatizes as "nature," this assertion would have weight. But as He is the author of Nature Himself, his decision would be preferable. However, it is a misdirected "impulse" that commits the above crimes. Do you ask if "natural laws" cultivate these impulses? I reply, all the laws of Nature are intrinsically good. But these laws acting incongruously, or in the wrong place, or in an inverted direction, will develop exceedingly angular or bad results. Bend the top of a vigorous twig to the earth, and keep it there for years, and the tree will not be erect as the law designed. Still a natural law, intrinsically good, caused it to grow badly. So with the mind. If kept low in the dust of untoward circumstances, it will not grow erect as designed

by the law of its own being; but the influence of laws out of place at this point of development—though these laws are intrinsically good, or useful in their place—will cause the young mind to grow badly. And when the Harmonial Philosophy urges us to study Nature and to follow her dictates, no perverted nature is designated, no artificially cultivated impulse is implied; but it is the PRIMARY and LEGITIMATE USE of natural law that is indicated, when men are counseled to follow the teachings of Nature. * * * And is it not right to "be natural," or to act in harmony with natural law and order? Those who study the legitimate use of natural law, will be guided to copious fountains of truth, and learn that there are more things in Nature than were formerly thought to be in Heaven.

The principles which "Christianity" appropriates, will have the same intrinsic worth by any other name; love, purity, and truth are ETERNAL, and existed before Christ taught them to his disciples. They need not always be labeled "Christianity." For it does not manifest these high plains of development, or add to the dignity of these principles, when men, who claim that title, are so strenuous for sects, creeds, and churches. This is the popular form of Christianity, while love, purity, and truth but sparingly enter into the actions and motives of men, or are assumed too often in the form of a cloak. These principles must go deeper than the outside, or Christianity even will still buffet time by ages ere it produces much good fruit.

Do love, purity, and truth depend upon history, tradition, or books for perpetuity? No, they are written in the vitality of to-day. They live with the living, and will guide us to high fountains of wisdom. But the Bible and Christianity depend largely upon history and tradition for their continuity. Is it not plain that all history is liable to error, liable to be written according to the excitement of the time and the prejudice of the writer? Let the faults of an age die with the age, and perpetuate them not by reiteration. Would ye grasp and stop the waters of a river because they are clearer than they have been? Nay, let them pass on, and use them as they come, there are better and clearer yet coming, and the fountain is inexhaustible as the coming future; so shall our works grow better and clearer.

I would submit the following to the action of candid reason. Is the dead past as momentous as the living present? Are events recorded in the uncertain past as useful and important as those of to-day? Act well to-day, and the basis of to-morrow's welfare is as a hill of granite. Does man improve in wisdom more to stand on a mound of skeletons of the past, and study the dusty lore of the buried, than he does to "act"—act in the living present, heart within and God overhead? A deeper knowledge of the living present will teach us far more

"Of coming events casting" sunlight before,
Than all of the past with its "mystical lore."

When we arrive at to-morrow, why retrace the journey? Having attained the present, our position is sufficient for any coming emergency without consulting the undeveloped past. The wisdom of the past is two strides back of the future. The wisdom of the present is one stride nearer, and it is sure and stable ground. The world is already too much imbued with past things, and too negligent of the present to grow properly. If a rose, originally found on the rough rocks of the hill-side, now a cultivated, magnificent resident of a warm garden below, were to pore over the times of its meager hill-side growth, as a better age than that of its cultivation, and reject heaven's breeze, because it came not with the high key-tone of the angular hill, or shake the invigorating dew from its petals because it comes more copiously than it did in the good old days of the rocky hill, that flower would become useless, pale, shriveled, and answer not its end in the beautiful garden which is its present home. It would be more a being of other days, its own progress obstructed, and affecting with like discord its fellows.

For the living to attempt to live a dead past, is reviling the beautiful law of order, as if the present were an innovation that little concerned us. The present, the momentous PRESENT, demands attention more than ALL WRITTEN HISTORY. "Let the dead Past bury its dead." Let the live Present be esteemed truly, and the Future will unfold a more advanced wisdom.

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SCIENTIFIC PROPHECY.—Some eighteen years ago a Mr. Hait, of Hilton, Conn., then pursuing his collegiate course, was suddenly deprived of his memory. His physician expressed his conviction that this was caused by the disproportionate expansion of the brain and the cranium, and that at the age of thirty-six or thirty-seven the brain would begin to contract, and his faculties would then be restored. Eighteen years have passed away, and the prophecy is fulfilled! The narrator says:

The man began to inquire for his books as if he had just laid them down, and resumed his mathematical studies where he left them. There were no traces in his mind of this long blank in his life, or any thing which had occurred in it, and he did not know that he was almost forty years of age.

A FUNERAL ORATION.

FROM THE NEW YORK TRIBUNE.

"The cause of Republican Liberty is prostrate in Europe!" joyfully exclaim the panders and sycophants of Despotism, and the false Priests who vanish gigantic crimes for hire confidently predict that for that cause there is no resurrection. Yes, "Freedom is in its tomb," say they to each other; "and we have rolled a great stone against the door—who shall dare remove it!" Let those who incline to believe, or even fear, that such crimes as those which crushed the liberties of France, Hungary, and Italy can permanently prosper, read the following Speech of Victor Hugo, at the funeral, in the Isle of Jersey, of an humble French Republican—therefore an exile and a proscrip—and be ashamed of their practical atheism. A nobler, more impressive, more appropriate, more affecting speech we never read, and its perusal strengthens our conviction that the dead night of Despotism rapidly draws to a close. Read it, Republicans of every land! and rejoice that Justice is the inexorable law of the universe, the immediate characteristic of God!

The *Evening Post* anticipates us in the translation of this noble funeral oration, as follows:

"In the last days of April, the French refugees in the Isle of Jersey followed one of their comrades to the field of final repose—Victor Hugo had been requested to pronounce, in the name of all, the last farewell. His discourse was as follows:

CITIZENS: The man to whom we have come to say the last farewell, Jean Bosquet, of Tarn en Garonne, was a noble soldier of democracy. We have seen him, an inflexible exile, waste away sorrowfully among us. A yearning for home was gnawing at his heart; he felt that the recollection of all he had left behind him was slowly poisoning him; he might have seen again his absent friends, the beloved places—his native city, his house: he had but to say a word. Think, execrable humiliation which M. Bonaparte calls amnesty, or pardon, was offered to him; he honestly rejected it—and he is dead. He was only thirty-four years of age. And now—there he lies.

I will not add praises to this simple life, to this grand death. Let him repose in peace in this obscure grave, where the earth will soon cover him, and whence his soul has gone to seek the eternal hopes of the tomb.

Let him sleep here, this Republican; and let the people know that there are still proud and pure hearts devoted to its cause. Let the Republic know that men will perish rather than forsake her. Let France know that men die because they can see her no more.

Let him sleep, this patriot, in the land of the stranger! And we, his companions in conflict and in adversity—we, who closed his eyes—if his native city, his family, his friends, ask us, "Where is he?" we will answer, "Dead in exile!" as the soldiery, when the name of Latour d'Auvergne was called, answered, "Dead on the field of honor!"

Citizens! To-day, in France, apostasy is joyous. The old land of the 14th of July and of the 10th of August, assists at the hideous spread of treason, and at the triumphal march of traitors. Not one unworthy action which is not immediately rewarded. A mayor breaks the law—he is made a prefect; a soldier dishonors his flag—he is made a general; a priest sells his religion—he is made a bishop; a judge prostitutes justice—he is made a senator; a prince, an adventurer, commits every crime, from the base trick which would shame a pickpocket, to the cruelty which would make an assassin shudder—and he becomes an emperor. Around and about these men are the sounds of triumphal music, bouquets, and dancing, addresses, applause, and genuflections. Servility comes to congratulate ignominy.

Citizens! These men have their festivals: well—we, too, have ours. When one of the companions of our banishment, wasted by home-sickness, exhausted by the slow fever of old habits broken up, and affections lacerated, gives way at last, and dies after having drunk to the dregs all the agonies of proscription, we follow his bier covered with a black cloth; we come to the side of his grave; we, too, kneel, not to succeed, but to the tomb; we bend over our buried brother, and we say to him: "Friend, we congratulate thee because thou hast been valiant; we congratulate thee because thou hast been generous and intrepid; we congratulate thee because thou hast been faithful; we congratulate thee because thou hast offered up to thy Republican faith the last breath of thy body, the last pulsation of thy heart; we congratulate thee because thou hast suffered; we congratulate thee that thou art dead!"

We raise our heads again, and we move away, our hearts full of a somber joy. Such are the festivals of exiles. This is the austere and serene thought which is at the bottom of our souls; and, in the presence of this sepulcher, of this grief which seems to swallow up a man, the presence of this appearance of annihilation, we feel ourselves strengthened in our principles and in our convictions. The man whose mind is made up, never trembles more firmly than on the shifting soil of the tomb. And our eyes fixed upon this dead body, upon this being who has faded away, upon this shadow which has vanished, we, unshaken believers, glorify that which is immortal, and that which is eternal; Liberty and God. Yes, God! Never should a tomb be closed, until this great, this living word has fallen into it! The dead claim it, and we are not the men to refuse it. Let the free and religious people, among whom we live, understand well, that the men of

progress, the men of democracy, the men of revolution, know that the destiny of the soul is two-fold; and that the abnegation they show in this life proves how profoundly they rely upon another.

Their faith in this grand and mysterious future resists even the repulsive spectacle which the enslaved Catholic clergy has presented since the second of December. At this moment, Roman papism startles the human conscience. Yes, I say it, and my heart is full of bitterness when I think of so much abjectness and shame; these priests, who, for money, for places, for crosses and miters, for the love of temporal goods, bless and glorify perjury, murder, and treason; these churches, where *Te Deums* are sung in honor of crowned crime; yes, these churches and these priests would be enough to shake the strongest convictions in the firmest souls, if beyond the church we did not see a heaven; and above the priest a God. And here, citizens, on the threshold of this open tomb, in the midst of this thoughtful throng which surrounds this grave, the moment has come to sound a solemn word, that may take root and spring up in every conscience.

Citizens: At this present hour, this fatal hour which will be marked in times to come, the principle of absolutism, the old principle of the past, triumphs all over Europe. It triumphs as it should triumph, by the sword, the ax, and the cord; by massacres and musketry; by tortures and the scaffold. Despotism, that Moloch surrounded by human bones, celebrates her fearful mysteries in open sunlight, under the pontificate of a Haynau, a Bonaparte, and a Radetzky. In Hungary, the gallows: in Lombardy, the gallows: in Sicily, the gallows: in France, the guillotine, transportation, and exile. In the Papal States alone, I cite the pope, who calls himself *le roi de douceur*; in the Papal States alone, in the last three years, sixteen hundred and forty patriots (the figures are authentic) have perished by shooting or hanging, without counting the innumerable many who are buried alive in dungeons. At this moment the Continent, as in the worst periods of history, is encumbered with scaffolds and corpses; and if, when the day comes, revolution should seek to make for herself a flag of the winding sheets of the victims, the shadow of that black flag would cover all Europe. This blood, which is flowing in streams and in torrents, all this blood, democrats, is yours.

And yet, citizens, in the presence of this saturnalia of murder, in the presence of these infamous tribunals, where assassins sit in the robes of the judge, in the presence of all these dear and sacred corpses, in the presence of this dismal and ferocious victory of reaction; I declare solemnly in the name of the exiles of Jersey, who have given me the authority to do so; and I say it too in the name of all republican exiles—and not one true republican voice will contradict me—I declare before this coffin of an exile, the second one we have lowered into the grave within ten days, we the exiles, we the victims, we abjure, for the great and inevitable day of revolutionary triumph, all feeling, all desire, all idea of bloody retribution.

The guilty will be chastised; certainly—they will be: all of them, and severely! this must be; but not one head shall fall; not one drop of blood, not one splash from the scaffold, shall stain the spotless robe of the republic of February. The head even of the brigand of December shall be respected with honor by the progressive. The revolution will make a grander example of that man by changing his imperial purple for the jacket of the galley-slave. No, we will not resort on the scaffold by the scaffold. We repudiate the old senseless law of retaliation. The law of retaliation, like the monarchy, is a part of the past; we repudiate the past.

The death penalty, gloriously abolished by the republic of 1848, reestablished odiously by Louis Bonaparte, is abolished by us, and forever. We have taken with us into exile the sacred doctrine of progress; we will faithfully bring it back to France. What we ask and wish of the future is justice, and not vengeance. And besides, the sight of slaves drunk with wine sufficed to give the Spartans a disgust for intemperance, so it is enough for us, as republicans, to see kings intoxicated with blood, to have forever a horror of scaffolds.

Yes, we declare it, and we call to witness this sea which binds Jersey to France, these fields, this quiet nature around us, this England which is listening to us. The men of the revolution—whatever the Bonapartist calumniators may say—wish to reënter France, not as exterminators, but as brothers. We call to witness our words, this holy heaven which glitters above us, shedding thoughts of peace and concord upon our hearts; we call to witness our dead brother, who lies in that grave, and who, while I speak, murmurs in his shroud, "Yes, my brothers, reject death! I have accepted it myself; I would not have it for others."

Citizens! These thoughts are in every man's mind, and I am only the interpreter of them. The day of bloody revolutions has passed; for what remains to be done, the indomitable law of progress will suffice. And moreover, let us be tranquil; every thing combats for us in the great battles we have still to fight—battles, whose evident necessity does not disturb the serenity of the thinker; battles, in which revolutionary energy will equal the desperation of monarchy; battles in

